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STATE FOR WHA/BSC, PM/WRA, ISN/CATR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2016
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY MILITARY AFFAIRS GROUP EXPLORING CHILEAN
DEMINE ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador Craig Kelly for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action request, see paragraph eight.

12. (C) Summary: On July 5 the Ambassador floated the idea with Foreign Ministry Director General for Foreign Affairs Carlos Portales of Chilean demining assistance to Afghanistan. Portales seemed receptive to the idea, and promised to discuss it with Under-secretary for War Gonzalo Garcia. Since that time, the Mission has continued to pursue the idea in an informal way with mid-level military and ministry contacts. Officials in the Army's engineering brigade and in the Ministry of Defense's National Demining Secretariat believe Chile would be open to deploying up to a

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dozen experienced demining experts to conduct training or cooperative exchanges for humanitarian demining in Afghanistan. Post understands from conversations with the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan that a Chilean deployment could play a valuable role in the CSTC-A's demining program. A Chilean deployment would likely depend on financial support from the U.S. or the allied effort in Afghanistan. End Summary.

13. (C) On September 13-14, Embosfs in Calama for the graduation of a demining course conducted by Seventh Group discussed Chilean participation in humanitarian demining in Afghanistan with a mid-level Chilean Army (CIAR) engineering command officer and the Deputy Director of the National Demining Commission (CNAD). The CIAR engineering command and CNAD are in charge of demining operations in northern Chile; the Navy and CNAD conduct demining operations in southern Chile. Both officials agreed that Chile had the expertise to conduct demining training and/or operations in Afghanistan. Chilean deminers would welcome the opportunity to get broader exposure and work with a multi-national force. (Post Note: In early-mid 2004, 2-3 Chilean Army engineers were present in Afghanistan observing coalition reconstruction efforts. End Note)

14. (C) The CIAR and CNAD officials said that any decision to participate in a program in Afghanistan would depend on a "political decision" from the Ministry of Defense. Chile had limited demining resources, they noted, and was not likely to make its Ottawa Treaty deadlines for demining within Chile. All demining in Chile was being conducted by the military, indeed the branch that placed the mines (army or marines) was responsible for removing them. Chile placed a high priority on conducting simultaneous demining efforts on all three frontiers - Argentina, Peru and Bolivia. Thus, any Chilean demining deployment would be limited in size, not to exceed 8 - 12 individuals. The CIAR officer speculated that the Navy

might deploy a demining team, as its efforts in the southern fiords were currently limited by lack of aerial medevac capacity.

¶5. (C) On October 3, Emboff contacted the CSTC-A point of contact for humanitarian demining to discuss the feasibility and desirability of a Chilean demining training mission to Afghanistan. CSTC-A would be able to integrate demining training into its programming and would welcome a Chilean force. However, CSTC-A POC noted potential operational difficulties, including translation, transportation, and difficulty in scheduling activities with Afghani military units still actively engaged in military operations.

¶6. (C) Comment: The Chilean military, particularly units that are directly involved in demining, seem receptive to the idea of a small (8-12 person) deployment Afghanistan. Training of Afghan deminers, or humanitarian demining as part of an international operation, are both possibilities. Political leadership might be open to cooperation as a way of demonstrating Chile's ongoing engagement with international PKOs. However, Chile is not likely to deploy unless it receives external funding - i.e. a support package that would allow it to deploy without impacting its already very limited domestic demining budget. Indeed, CNAD actively solicits donations to support its national demining program. The GOC would likely want to keep a deployment to Afghanistan low-profile.

¶7. (C) Action Request: Post requests Department's guidance on a prospective Chilean demining mission to Afghanistan. Specifically, should Post or the Department engage the GOC and Chilean MOD on organizing a demining deployment to Afghanistan? What would be potential funding or offset mechanisms we could offer the Chileans to encourage such a deployment?
KELLY